




Carolina country

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

It's Renewable!

INSIDE:
Solar electricity
Good news for gardens
Art in the yard

SAVE When You Grow A Zoysia Lawn From Plugs!

From Plugs

To A Fabulous Lawn



GRASS SEED WILL NEVER GROW A LAWN LIKE THIS!
Save Water! Save Time! Save Work! Save Money!

Grass Seed Is For The Birds!

Stop wasting money, time and work sowing new grass seed each spring, only to see birds eat the seed – or rain wash it away – before it can root. Plant a genuine Amazoy™ Zoysia lawn from our living Plugs only once... and never plant a new lawn again!



Zoysia Grows Where Other Grass Doesn't!

Zoysia is the perfect choice for hard-to-cover spots, areas that are play-worn or have partial shade, and for stopping erosion on slopes. North, South, East, West – Zoysia will grow in *any* soil, no ifs, ands or buts!

Each Zoysia Plug You Plant In Your Soil Is GUARANTEED TO GROW Within 45 Days Or We'll Replace It FREE!

To ensure best results, we ship you living sheets of genuine Amazoy™ Zoysia Grass, harvested direct from our farms. Plugs are not cut all the way through. Before planting, simply finish the separation by cutting 1"-sq. Plugs with shears or knife. Then follow the included easy instructions to plant Plugs into small plug holes about a foot apart. Our guarantee and planting method are your assurance of lawn success backed by more than 5 decades of specialized lawn experience.

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Eliminates Endless Weeds And Weeding!

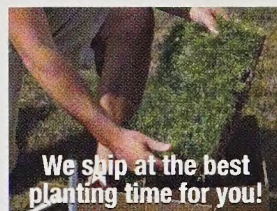
No more pulling out weeds by hand or weeds sprouting up all over your lawn. Zoysia Plugs spread into a dense, plush, deep-rooted, established lawn that drives out unwanted growth and stops crab-grass and summer weeds from germinating.

Environmentally Friendly, No Chemicals Needed!

No weeding means no chemicals. You'll never have to spray poisonous pesticides and weed killers again! Zoysia lawns are safer for the environment, as well as for family and pets!

Cuts Watering & Mowing By As Much As 2/3!

Many established Zoysia lawns only need to be mowed once or twice a season. Watering is rarely, if ever, needed – even in summer!



Meyer Zoysia Grass was perfected by the U.S. Gov't, released in cooperation with the U.S. Golf Association as a superior grass.

www.ZoysiaFarms.com/mag

Stays Green In Summer Through Heat & Drought!

When ordinary lawns brown up in summer heat and drought, your Zoysia lawn stays green and beautiful. The hotter it gets, the better it grows. *Zoysia thrives in blistering heat (120°)*, yet it won't winter-kill to 30° below zero. It only goes off its green color after killing frosts, but color returns with consistent spring warmth. Zoysia is the perfect choice for water restrictions and drought areas!

Our Customers Love Their Zoysia Lawns!

One of our typical customers, Mrs. M.R. Mitter of PA, wrote how "I've never watered it, only when I put the Plugs in... Last summer we had it mowed 2 times... When everybody's lawns here are brown from drought, ours just stays as green as ever!"

Order Now And Save!

The more Amazoy™ Zoysia Plugs you order, the more you SAVE! And remember, once your Zoysia lawn is established, you'll have an endless supply of new Plugs for planting wherever you need them. Order now!

FREE! PLANTING TOOL
 With Order of 400 Plugs or More!
 Saves time, work and effort when making holes for Plugs!

Order Your ZOYSIA Plugs Now — Harvested Daily From Our Farms And Shipped To You Direct!

ZOYSIA GRASS SUPER SALE — SAVE OVER 50%!
PLUS Get Up To 900 Plugs — FREE!

Please send me guaranteed Amazoy as checked:

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<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Basic Packs + 1 FREE	200	100	—	\$ 26.85	\$ 17.90	\$ 5.00	30%
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Basic Packs + 2 FREE	400	200	Free Step-on Plugger	\$ 62.65	\$ 35.80	\$ 7.50	40%
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Basic Packs + 3 FREE	500	300	Free Step-on Plugger	\$ 80.55	\$ 44.75	\$ 10.00	42%
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Basic Packs + 4 FREE	600	400	Free Step-on Plugger	\$ 98.45	\$ 53.70	\$ 12.50	44%
<input type="checkbox"/> 9 Basic Packs + 7 FREE	900	700	Free Amazoy Power Auger	\$ 168.15	\$ 80.55	\$ 15.00	50%
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Md. residents add 6% tax \$ _____

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ENCLOSED TOTAL \$ _____

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We ship all orders the same day plugs are packed at earliest correct planting time in your area.

Order Now! www.ZoysiaFarms.com/mag

Not shipped outside the USA or into WA or OR



March 2009

Volume 41, No. 3

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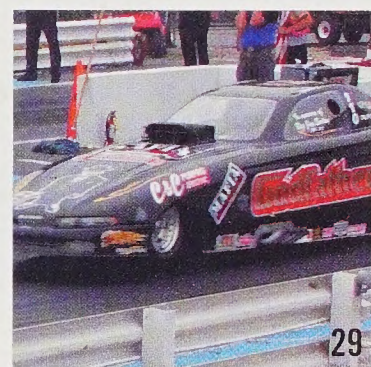
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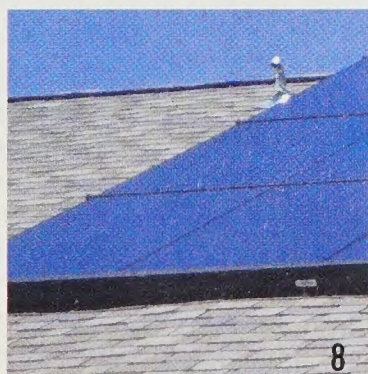


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North Carolina's electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to nearly 900,000 homes and businesses. The 26 electric cooperatives are each member-owned, not-for-profit and overseen by a board of directors elected by the membership.

Why Do We Send You Carolina Country Magazine?

Your cooperative sends you Carolina Country as a convenient, economical way to share with its members information about services, director elections, meetings and management decisions. The magazine also carries legal notices that otherwise would be published in other media at greater cost.

Your co-op's board of directors authorizes a subscription to Carolina Country on behalf of the membership at a cost of less than \$4 per year.

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Carolina Country magazine is available monthly to members of North Carolina's electric cooperatives. If you are a member of one of these cooperatives but do not receive Carolina Country, you may request a subscription by calling Member Services at the office of your cooperative. If your address has changed, please inform your cooperative.

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How to make kilowatts more productive



By Tony E. Herrin

If we all can use energy more efficiently, we are effectively providing our own source of power. For example, if you replace three 100-watt incandescent light bulbs in your home with three equivalent compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), which use one-third less electricity, you retain the same amount of lighting, lower your power usage, and make more electricity available to be used somewhere else.

And if we apply this throughout our industry, energy efficiency measures could go a long way toward making the electricity we use do more. While energy efficiency alone cannot offset America's growing demand for electricity, it can slow the tide of increased consumption that requires utilities to plan on building more power plants.

We will still need to build more power generation in the United States, including here in North Carolina, to sustain economic growth. But energy efficiency and other demand control initiatives provide a cost-effective strategy today to manage our power supply resources better and lower power generation needs over time.

As a whole, U.S. electricity consumption by residences and businesses is projected to climb at an average yearly rate of 1.07 percent between now and 2030. In other words, every year we will use 1.07 percent more electricity than the previous 12 months. In North Carolina, we expect to see a population growth of about 40 percent by 2030, so we will need to supply even more electric power than the national average requirement.

You can help keep your future power bills down by using electricity as efficiently as you can at home and at work.

North Carolina's electric cooperatives for many years have offered programs to help you contain your energy use and keep your electric bill at reasonable levels. Recently we have advised you to have an energy audit performed at your home or business, and have promoted efficient Energy

Star appliances, efficient CFL bulbs, water heater insulation, and simple steps for reducing your daily energy consumption. These steps will go a long way toward helping us all contain costs now and in the future.

Also, North Carolina's electric cooperatives have used load-control mechanisms in the past as a means to control heavy use of certain appliances at times of day when power demand is high and the cost of that peak-demand power is expensive. In light of today's technological advancements, many of these control systems have become obsolete. We are currently analyzing the benefits of new load-control technology and will be deciding our next course of action soon.

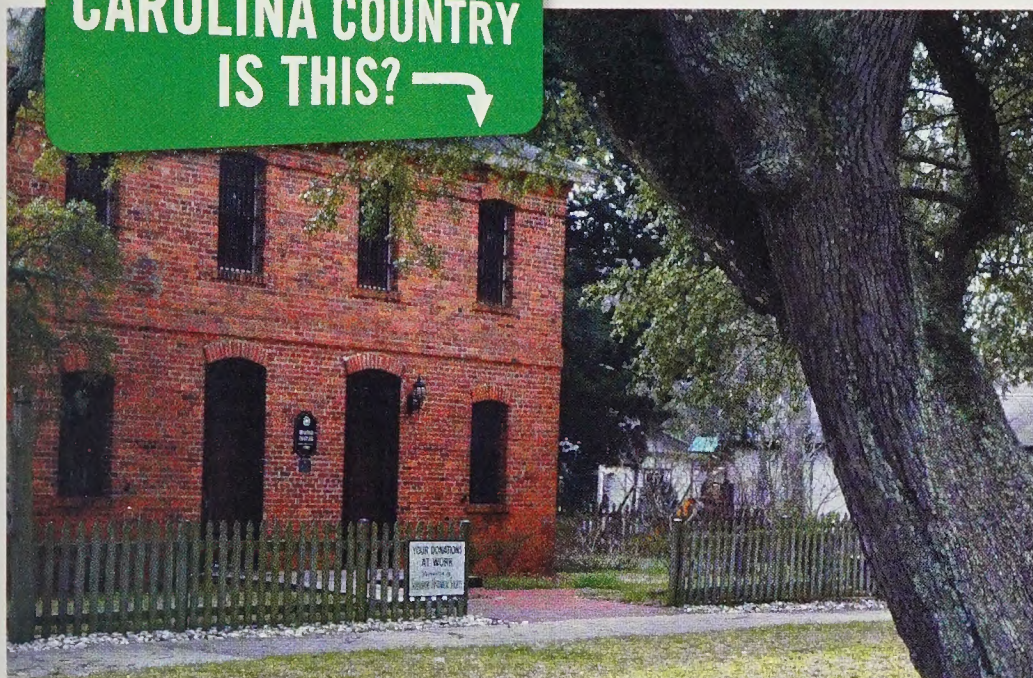
As a not-for-profit, consumer-owned utility, your electric cooperative is not motivated to sell more kilowatt-hours from a business standpoint. Instead, we try to maximize use of existing resources and infrastructure. Efficiency has always been a natural part of your cooperative's mode of business.

Increasing energy efficiency in residential and business sectors could reduce the rate of growth for electricity consumption by 22 percent over the next two decades, according to the Electric Power Research Institute. That's a lot of power.

Energy efficiency remains key to keeping electricity affordable in the face of rising energy prices. We are developing innovative programs that will help you get the most out of every kilowatt. If you can reduce your own electricity bill and free up kilowatts for us to distribute elsewhere, that's a win-win situation. ☺

Tony Herrin is executive vice president and general manager of Union Power Cooperative, the Touchstone Energy cooperative serving more than 65,000 member accounts in Union, Stanly, Cabarrus, Mecklenburg and Rowan counties. He also chairs GreenCo Solutions that is studying and implementing renewable energy and efficiency projects for its member cooperatives.

WHERE IN CAROLINA COUNTRY IS THIS? →



February winner

The February picture showed a building off the crossroads of Hwy. 73 in the community of Jackson Springs in Moore County. Judy Burroughs told us it was once Whitley's Store near the local hotel that hosted visitors to the local hot springs in the early 1900s. Carmen Alvarez said the hotel burned in 1933. Of more than 165 correct answers, the \$25 winners chosen at random were Tina and Tracy Marsh of Carthage, members of Central EMC.

This is a Carolina Country scene in Touchstone Energy territory. If you know where it is, send your answer by March 6 with your name, address, phone number and the name of your electric cooperative.

By e-mail: where@carolinacountry.com

Or by mail: Where in Carolina Country?
P.O. Box 27306
Raleigh, NC 27611

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our April issue, will receive \$25.



Taylor kissing Tanna

This is a picture of our pastor's son, Taylor, and me back in 1990, when we were about 3. Our church is located in Stanfield. Church had just let out when our parents saw us going for a kiss. His mom had a camera with her and decided to snap the picture. It was 18 years ago, and they moved away about 13 years ago, but I still look at that picture and remember all the good times our families had together.

Tanna Love, Monroe, Union Power

Hooray for Haiku

Haiku is far more than was indicated in the brief Webster Dictionary note in February's "Joyner's Corner." It is an ancient Buddhist form, developed as a training tool to teach young priests-in-training. Its focus was to enable them to develop a severe economy of thought and discipline. These were imposed by the necessity to express a complete thought or concept within a very stringent, structured format.

I took up Haiku in an attempt to overcome a life-long problem of being tiresomely wordy in communicating with others. Two of my resulting efforts follow.

Rev. Charles Stanley

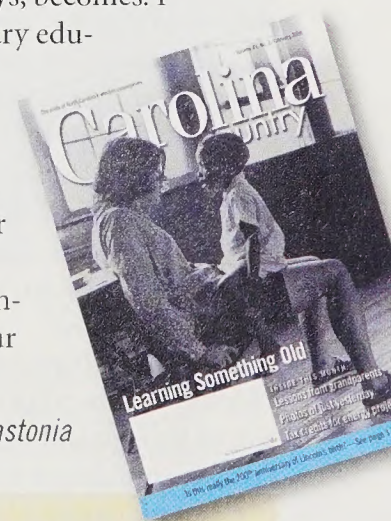
Too verbose am I,
but Haiku should improve it.
Discipline of thought!

Spirit is the cup
And life the liquid in it.
Drink! The cup remains.

What teaching means

I sat down with a morning cup of coffee, banana bread slice and your magazine. When I saw the beautiful cover, I ended up with tears in my eyes. The picture captured what teaching means and, on many days, becomes. I hold an elementary education degree, and believe me your cover could not have arrived at a better time. Thank you for being so down-to-earth with your members.

Laurin McCarley, Gastonia



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Carteret-Craven Electric helps students and parents track home energy usage



Carteret-Craven Electric's Gary Zajac hands out energy efficiency materials and the monitors to students.



Carteret-Craven Electric marketing specialist Richard Tuttle installs one of the meter "collars" for the PowerCost Monitor pilot program.

It's usually the other way around, but in Morehead City, kids are reminding parents to watch their power usage.

The turnabout is part of a new pilot program that Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative initiated this past fall. The cooperative loaned PowerCost Monitors™ to fifth-graders at Morehead City Elementary School at Camp Glenn, who then asked their parents to use the programmable monitors in their homes.

The monitors show the kids and parents real-time energy use and the cost of turning on and off various electrical appliances. CCEC also provided the "Kilo-Wattchers" (a name the kids developed) with notebooks for tracking energy use and other energy education materials. About 18 parents had monitors installed, and students are analyzing their homes' monthly electricity use.

The program serves several purposes. CCEC is able to test the effectiveness of the PowerCost Monitor and collect data to see if these devices help homeowners modify their energy use behaviors to reduce consumption and save money. Morehead City Elementary is using it as a teaching tool as well. When the 2008–2009 school year ends, students will have created a database and developed a class presentation on the monitors' effectiveness.

"This is learning with real world meaning," says CCEC communications director Lisa Galizia. "Not only for the students, but also for the cooperative, which is looking for ways to help its consumers manage their energy usage."

CCEC expects to share the energy use data with other electric cooperatives across the state.

QVC's Edgecombe County solar field sends power to the grid

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC, a Touchstone Energy cooperative based in Tarboro, has helped QVC, one of the world's largest multimedia retailers, connect a solar-electric generation field to the regional electricity grid. The cooperative worked in partnership with GreenCo Solutions, a cooperative owned by some of North Carolina's electric cooperatives.

The 1-megawatt solar energy facility is near the QVC Rocky Mount, Inc. distribution center between Rocky Mount and Tarboro. The project began commercial operation in November.

Through a 10-year agreement, the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation power supply cooperative in Raleigh will purchase the energy produced by the facility, returning it to the grid for use by North Carolina consumers. GreenCo Solutions will purchase the Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) from the project. Under the state's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (REPS), electric cooperatives must obtain up to 10 percent of their energy through renewable resources or energy efficiency measures by 2018.

The ground installation of the solar panels completed at the 1,300-employee QVC Rocky Mount campus spans



The QVC solar field (at right) covers 5 acres and produces 100,000 kilowatts.

nearly 5 acres. The 1-megawatt solar array uses SunPower® Tracker solar tracking technology. The system is able to capture up to 25 percent more energy than fixed solar systems by following the sun's movement across the sky, and brings the added benefit of reduced land use requirements.

Try This!

Q: What do you think of electric bikes?

A: A number of battery-powered bicycles are coming

on the market that won't get you your exercise but will get you from point A to B and back with minimal environmental impact. They cost about \$1,500 plus about 25 cents a day in electricity costs. Some require pedaling, some don't.

The three models of electric scooters made by EVTAMERICA top out at a maximum speed of 45 miles per hour. Meanwhile, eGO makes electric bikes that can speed along at 25 mph in "go fast" mode, but also have a "go far" mode, which trades off speed for distance (some 24 miles on a single charge). The manufacturer says the bikes are powerful enough to tow a car.

Velotek scooters only go 20 mph at top speed, but they can cover up to 50 miles on a single charge. Their model also is typically exempt from licensing, registration and insurance regulations in most jurisdictions.

The lead-acid batteries that most electric bikes use today will soon be replaced with greener and more efficient varieties, such as lithium ion and nickel zinc. These new batteries will make the vehicles cost more, at least initially, but they will also trim bike weight significantly and provide a lot more distance per charge. And eGo is working on a model with a small solar array behind the seat to extend the bike's range once its electric charge starts to run low.

To learn more: eGO, www.egovehicles.com; Velotek, www.velotek.com; EVTAMERICA, www.evtamerica.com.

Source: E/The Environmental Magazine, www.emagazine.com.

Reuse your bags

After finishing a box of cereal, save the strong paper bag to dispose of food scraps or anything else before tossing in the trash. The bag is also good for storing onions and similar foods (to prevent odors) in the refrigerator. Be sure to twist tie the bag.

You also can use plastic grocery bags inside the toes of your shoes to serve as inexpensive "shoe trees."

N.D. Greene, Sherrills Ford

Can you help others save energy?

Send your conservation ideas or questions to us.

P.O.Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611, or E-mail: editor@carolinacountry.com



Brunswick Electric warms hearts and homes this winter

Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation (BEMC), the 80,000-member Touchstone Energy cooperative in Brunswick and Columbus counties, has received a warm response to its Warm Homes, Warm Hearts program launched last fall.

Warm Hearts provides financial assistance to families who are not able to pay their winter heating bills.

"Our community is reaching out through this fund to help an elderly resident, a struggling young family, or perhaps someone that been swamped with unexpected medical bills or a job layoff," said Judy Gore, vice president of customer services.

CEO Robert "Chip" Leavitt, Jr. said that BEMC employees kicked off the program by raising over \$12,000. He added that BEMC will match member contributions dollar-for-dollar up to \$50,000. By February some \$60,000 had been distributed in the communities.

All contributors to the campaign receive a thank you gift, including a colorful static window cling with the Warm Homes, Warm Hearts logo. Contributors of \$25 receive a cuddly plush 10-inch stuffed animal version of the campaign's mascot, Comfy Bear. Those who donate \$75 or more receive a cozy soft fleece throw embroidered with the Warm Hearts emblem.

Warm Homes, Warm Hearts funds are available to those living in Brunswick and Columbus counties. Funds are administered through Brunswick Family Assistance and the Columbus County Department of Aging. Eligibility to receive assistance is determined by those agencies. Go to www.bemc.org



Co-op crews help after Kentucky ice storm

Five of North Carolina's electric cooperatives in late January sent line crews to Kentucky to assist the electric cooperatives in that state with power restoration efforts. A major winter storm moved across Kentucky and neighboring states, resulting in ice accumulation significant enough to cause widespread power outages.



The cooperatives in North Carolina that sent crews, including trucks and other mobile support vehicles, to Kentucky are: Blue Ridge EMC based in Lenoir; Central EMC based in Sanford; EnergyUnited based in Statesville; Pee Dee EMC based in Wadesboro; and Rutherford EMC based in Forest City.

The deployment of crews is part of a mutual aid agreement shared between the nation's nearly 1,000 electric cooperatives to help one another in times of emergency, such as natural disasters. Electric cooperatives across the country use the same line system engineering standards, which means line crews from any part of the country can quickly help sister cooperatives in restoration efforts.

A HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO Solar Electric Systems

Producing your own electricity with a rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) system can have several benefits, including reducing your electric needs from the local utility grid and buffering you from volatile energy costs. A typical residential system can cost between \$10,000–\$30,000, but there are a number of rebates, tax breaks and other incentives that can significantly reduce the cost of installing a PV system. For those who have the tax liability to take advantage of the state and federal tax credits available through 2016, solar PV systems can make good bottom-line sense.

Today, a residential PV system will cost \$7 to \$10 per watt of output power (or about 20 to 35 cents per kilowatt-hour, without factoring in available tax credits), including all parts and installation. Although some power electronic components may require periodic replacement, the system can run virtually maintenance-free in any climate for 25 years or more.

Remember that efficiency is cheaper than PV and serves as an important building block toward smarter energy consumption and lower monthly costs. Spending tens of thousands of dollars to generate electricity to power inefficient lights, appliances and electronics simply doesn't make sense. So before installing a PV system, a home energy audit is a smart idea. Purchasing Energy Star appliances, lighting and other electronics is also a good way to save energy. Even turning off the lights and minimizing air-conditioning usage will go a long way to reducing your overall energy needs and could help you make a smaller, less-expensive PV system the best choice.

A PV System in Detail

A typical PV system is made up of the array, the inverter and a number of other components collectively referred to as balance of system (BOS).

Array. The array is a series of PV modules, which themselves are composed of numerous PV cells. The cells are made mostly of silicon or another semiconducting material that converts incoming light energy into electricity. Although there are many emerging PV cell materials and designs, those that are widely commercialized include single-crystal silicon, polycrystalline silicon, and thin-film modules made from amorphous silicon, cadmium-telluride or other materials.

Inverter. An inverter is a power-conditioning device that converts the incoming direct-current (DC) power from the PV array into grid-compatible alternating-current (AC) power.

Though the PV array and mounting structure will typically last for 25 years or more, most inverters are guaranteed for only 5 to 10 years. As a result, periodic replacement of the inverter is an important consideration.

Balance of system. The BOS components include the mounting structure, wiring, switches and a metering apparatus that facilitates grid integration (Figure 1). Most of the PV installations today are in homes that are tied to the electric grid because adding batteries can significantly increase the cost and maintenance of a PV system.

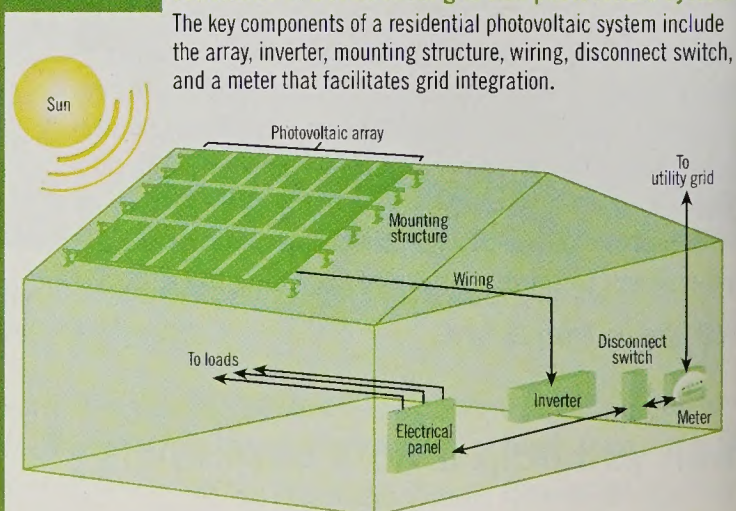
Incentives

The U.S. government offers a 30 percent federal tax credit for any residential solar PV system installed between now and December 31, 2016.

North Carolina currently offers a 35 percent personal tax credit on solar electric systems. The credit may not exceed \$10,500. North Carolina now also allows a local property tax exemption of 80 percent of the appraised value of a PV system. Residents also may receive premium payments for the power generated by their solar system from the statewide NC GreenPower program.

In addition to these incentives, a solar PV system—unlike many other home improvement expenditures—will pay for itself over time. A typical payback timeframe for an individual who is able to take advantage of available state and federal tax credits will range between 7 and 18 years, depending on a variety of factors. After that point, the system will continue to produce power from the sun, resulting in a positive cash flow on your solar investment.

FIGURE 1: Schematic of a residential grid tied photovoltaic system



Note: The placement and type of disconnect switch will be determined by policies implemented by your electric cooperative.

The best place for homeowners to find local and national rebates and incentives, as well as information on grid interconnection, is the Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency (www.dsireusa.org).

Evaluating Your Home for PV

When considering a solar electric system for your home, take into account the available solar resource, the condition of your roof, the size of the PV system, and any shade that could hinder system performance. These are factors a qualified solar contractor should measure and take into account when visiting your home for a consultation.

Available solar resource. Solar resource refers to the average annual amount of sunlight that reaches a given site. The greater the solar resource, the more energy a particular PV array will generate. A qualified contractor can provide this information for you, or you can do it yourself with a free online calculation tool from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory called PVWATTS (http://rredc.nrel.gov/solar/codes_algs/PVWATTS).

Condition of the existing roof. It's important that you evaluate the condition of your roof prior to installing a PV array because the cost of repairs or a complete re-roofing will be substantially greater once the array is in place. If the existing roof is in poor condition, the time to address that problem is before the array is installed.

Size of the system. Residential PV systems can span a large range in terms of capacity and price. The size of a

PV system depends on many factors, including your budget, annual energy consumption, amount of usable roof space, orientation of home, nearby trees and so forth. Working with a qualified contractor will help you select a system that best matches your needs.

Shading. A PV array that is even partially shaded will generate less electricity than one that is in direct sunlight. But what many people don't realize is the drop in electric output can be disproportionately larger than the amount of shade provided by a nearby tree or building due to engineering constraints in the construction of PV panels. However, it is important to realize that going outdoors and chopping down all the trees near your house to make way for a PV system would probably be a poor choice—without that shade, your home will get hotter in the summer and may require more electricity to cool.

Using software tools, a qualified contractor can easily assess the degree of shading a proposed array will experience throughout the year and determine the best PV design and placement for optimum electricity output.

Selecting Qualified Installers

Once you've addressed energy efficiency in your home and are ready to consider investing in a solar PV system, the next important step is selecting the right contractor. But as the demand for PV systems has boomed in recent years, so too has the number of contractors in the field who lack qualification or formal training in PV system design, installation or relevant electric codes.

Since 2003, the best indicator of contractor competence has been certification by the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP). This certification is given to PV installers who pass a rigorous exam and demonstrate that they possess a high degree of experience or education related to PV system design and installation. Contractors are listed in the NABCEP database (www.nabcep.org).

Another resource for finding local contractors and reviewing their certifications is www.Findsolar.com.

Maintenance Considerations

Once your PV array is installed, little system maintenance is required. The modules have no moving parts and usually carry a warranty of at least 20 years. Regular rainfall is often sufficient to eliminate dirt accumulation, but where rain is infrequent, occasionally rinsing the modules off with water will restore full-power operation. In some locations it's helpful (if it's possible) to remove snow from panels that have a particularly shallow slope.

Inverters require maintenance far more frequently than the modules do, but in most cases, the system owner's role is limited to monitoring the status indicators and notifying the installer that the inverter needs service. Ⓢ

Sources
Thanks to Southern Energy Management for resource help and graphics. Southern Energy management is a leading provider of sustainable energy services in North Carolina. (866) 575-9191. www.southern-energy.com

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Get Ready for Gardening

By Carla Burgess

Starting seeds for spring

Many perennials and some annuals benefit from a head start indoors. People often start seeds in a sunny windowsill, but seedlings will grow straighter and sturdier if grown under lights. Incandescent bulbs do not provide the proper spectrum of light for plant growth, so you must use fluorescents. The setup need not be fancy. For most purposes, standard fluorescent tubes will work just as well as the more expensive grow lights. Choose a fixture that fits your space (home improvement stores stock these) and select lights to fit. Hang the fixture with a chain so the lights can be raised as plants grow. The lights should be no higher than 4 inches from the top of the seedlings. To know when to start seeds, check the seed packet. Most will say how many weeks in advance of warm weather (usually after the last frost date) to sow them indoors.

Free seeds of the Wildflower of the Year

The North Carolina Botanical Garden has picked Piedmont Barbara's-buttons (*Marshallia obovata* var. *obovata*) as Wildflower of the Year for 2009. The Botanical Garden praises this Southern wildflower as "simultaneously sturdy and delicate, cheerful and elegant, petite and eye-catching." The tiny white flower petals give each button-shaped flower head a lacy appearance. Single flowers about 1 inch across are borne atop upright stems in April and May. Stems may reach 2 feet tall, but the plant is typically shorter. Fire-pink (*Silene virginica*) and lobed tickseed (*Coreopsis auriculata*) are good landscape companions with similar stature and preference for well-drained

soils in full sun. The natural habitat of Piedmont Barbara's-buttons is dry, open woodlands and sunny edges, such as power line rights of way. It ranges primarily in the Piedmont of North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Georgia.

To receive free seeds of Piedmont Barbara's-buttons, along with growing instructions, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: 2009 NCWFOY, North Carolina Botanical Garden, CB 3375 Totten Center, UNC-CH, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3375. The Botanical Garden and the Garden Club of North Carolina Inc. are co-sponsors of the Wildflower of the Year program, now in its 28th year. The project's aim is to actively promote attractive Southeastern wildflowers.

New sweets for the garden

The summer melon 'Lambkin' and fall squash 'Honey Bear' took top honors in the 2009 All-America Selections annual competition. The AAS organization's mission

is to promote new seed varieties with superior garden performance judged in impartial trials in North America.

★ 'Lambkin' is lauded as a 2- to 4-pound melon with a thin rind and sweet, white, juicy flesh. It is ready for the table earlier than most other gourmet melons, maturing in 65 to 75 days. Because of the early harvest, the vines produce more melons. 'Lambkin' is classified as a "Christmas-type" melon because of its long storage life. The oval melon has attractive yellow skin with green mottling. Seeds and plants should be available in retail stores this spring. Like other melons, 'Lambkin' should be planted after the last frost date and after the ground has warmed. You can get a jump on the season by starting seeds in pots a few weeks before the desired transplanting date. Or lay black plastic in the planting area to help heat up the soil before direct-sowing.



Sweet and juicy 'Lambkin' matures in 65 to 75 days, much earlier than other gourmet melons.

Photo courtesy of NC State University



'Blue Chip' is the first of what will be a series of compact butterfly bushes sold under the name Lo and Behold.

'Honey Bear' is an acorn squash, among the group known as winter squash. It has a sweet flavor when cooked. 'Honey Bear' is bushy and compact, growing 2 to 3 feet tall with a spread of 4 to 5 feet (no vines). It has a high yield, producing 3 to 5 squashes per bush. The robust production of 1-pound fruits is due to the plant's tolerance of powdery mildew. At the end of the season, many acorn squash varieties succumb to mildew, and fruit doesn't mature. From seed-sowing to harvest time is about 100 days.

A blue chip butterfly bush

One of the most unusual new butterfly bushes (*Buddleia davidii*) to hit the shelves is a compact variety developed by Dennis Werner at North Carolina State University. 'Blue Chip' has a dense, compact form—typically 2 to 3 feet in height and spread. This free-blooming dwarf shrub is loaded with bluish-lavender flowers. 'Blue Chip' is suitable for the garden and pots.

Take the strain and pain out of gardening

We now have a wide variety of options to make gardening easier and more accessible. People with impaired mobility and limited strength can benefit from specially designed tools and accessories, as can gardeners who want to prevent repetitive-motion injuries and back strain.

Tools with ergonomically designed handles help keep the hand in a natural position: wrists straight, hands rotated and relaxed, fingers curled and thumbs straight. "Pistol-grip" and curved handles encourage this posture. Tools with permanent or

add-on arm braces and support cuffs further reduce hand strain, transferring strength from the forearm directly to the blades or tines.

- Yard tools with telescopic handles help extend reach and are particularly useful for gardening in a sitting position, such as from a bench or wheelchair. This design is available in rakes, cultivators and trowels. Extended-reach pruners are also available.
- Pruners and loppers with ratcheting mechanisms help boost cutting power. They grip and hold a branch, allowing the user to release and squeeze again, cutting a single branch progressively.
- Oscillating hoes have hinged, stirrup-shaped blades that cut on both the forward and backward motion. Since dirt doesn't stack up behind the blade, there is less stooping and bending that causes back strain. The blades can be attached to a regular tool handle or broom handle.

- Add-on T-grip and D-grip handles are available for straight-handled tools such as rakes and hoes. They help increase lifting/pushing power and leverage while decreasing back and wrist strain.

Gardening up

A raised bed is a cinch for creating good drainage and eliminating the arduous task of digging new beds. Growing vegetables, fruits, herbs and flowers in raised beds also allows you to put more plants in a smaller area. The compact mini-gardens are easier to maintain than gardens laid out in rows. Walls for raised beds may be made of lumber, concrete blocks, bricks or any other material that will sufficiently contain the soil. Keep the size manageable, with beds no wider than 3 or 4 feet so that weeding and harvesting is practical. You can find simple solutions for construction and design at <http://extension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/hort/g06985.htm>.

Carla Burgess writes the monthly Carolina Gardens column for Carolina Country magazine.

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Yard Art

Your yard ornaments say a lot about your sense of style and your sense of humor



Thanks to everyone who sent in photos of yard ornaments. You can see more at our Web site. Next month we'll publish your stories about old-fashioned summers. (Deadline was Feb. 15.) For more themes and rules of our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series, see page 15.



Inspired from on high

Each one of these lawn ornaments is made from various tree trunks and limbs. They all are on display in the same yard. The red and white "elephant" proudly displays the owners' house number.

An article in our local newspaper several years back said the artist claimed he received these images in multiple dreams from God and was told to make them over a period of years. (He also may have had too many dill pickles and onions before he went to bed on those nights.)

While they are no longer in their fresh-painted glory, they still are quite an eye catcher if you're not a local.

Romie Vance, Chesapeake, Va., Halifax EMC



This Little Pig went nowhere

This bizarre little boar stands guard in my front yard. His cagey nose is wrinkled, his wary ears are perked and his defiant eyes squint into an unmoving stare. The stocky, molded cast-iron porker, complete with vent and toting handle on its fat side, is actually a working grill, which has seared numerous steaks and barbequed many chops.

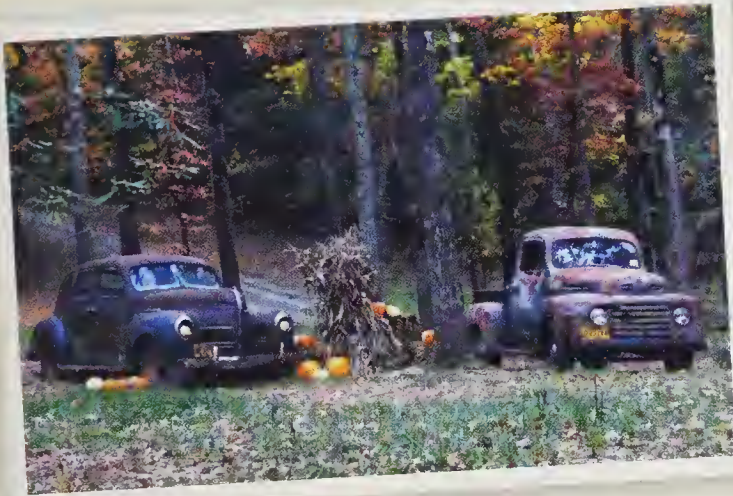
I didn't purchase my tubby yard adornment. Instead, it's a gift (a cast off?) from my son-in-law, who actually likes me. He, in fact, cooked with the unusual utensil and liked it too well to release it into uncaring hands (re: the dumpster).

I didn't place the hefty hog on my moss-carpeted lawn. It was simply too heavy to transport further when I lifted it from the tailgate of my Subaru. The black brute sits with artificial patience, waiting for more proper placement. But I have grown used to being greeted by the grumpy swine when I pull into my drive. He serves as grill, ornament and landmark as well. I direct my visitors to turn left at "this little pig."

Linda Edwards, Morganton, Rutherford EMC



Annual Garden Guide



Rustic

The 1940 Plymouth and 1949 Ford are our lawn ornaments here in Alleghany County. The pumpkin and corn fodder were beautiful along with the trees this fall. The old car and truck added a rustic touch to the fall scene.

Dean & Karen & son Marty Todd, Glade Valley, Blue Ridge Electric

Art Field

This "Art Field" is located in Moore County on Bog Oak Church Rd.

Joe Sonoskus, Carthage, Randolph EMC



Irene and Floyd

The 1999 hurricanes Irene and Floyd left North Carolina water-soaked and flooded. A massive double-trunked wild cherry tree that had to be removed from my side yard left me with a 6-foot-tall stump.

Inspiration struck! I placed an old face-painted pot on one flat surface and a clay jack-o-lantern on the other. Before "Irene" could say "I am a flower pot," "Floyd" was in love. I dressed them as a couple and changed their looks seasonally.

Eventually Floyd lost his hands and Irene popped her buttons, but the lovers stood as garden art until November 2007. Then, Floyd's head rolled off and Irene had to go on alone. She is still in my yard with her wacky smile as tacky garden art, and she wishes you well.

Betty Williams, Mt. Olive, Tri-County EMC



Man and burro

The donkey appears to be walking behind the man and pushing him with his nose, as donkeys sometimes do. I've been looking at this yard for over 20 years, and the more I look, the tackier it gets. It reminds me of a favorite expression my ex-mother-in-law used to use: "It's something on a rat's tail." I don't know what it means, but it's kind of catchy, don't you think?

Carol Winebarger, Traphill, Surry-Yadkin EMC

send us your best **EARN \$50**

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you \$50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

May 2009

Inside My Dream Home

What would go inside your dream home? Already there? Send photos.

Deadline: March 15

June 2009

Dumb Exercises

Send stories of those exercise routines or machines that really didn't do any good.

Deadline: April 15

July 2009

Summer Recipes

Recipes using summer foods.

Deadline: May 15

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. One entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos should be a minimum of 1200 by 800 pixels.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.

5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
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The Green, Green Grass of Home

By Katie Lamar Jackson

Looking for a low-input, sustainable, environmentally friendly way to care for your lawn? You can try goats—they'll keep the lawn trimmed and provide fertilizer at the same time—but they may not be ideal for many settings. If you want to have your lawn and sustainability, too, there are some reasonable non-goat options.

Mowing is a major drain on time and resources, but also is vital for a healthy lawn. Proper mowing practices help turf-grasses develop a dense stand, which, in turn, keeps down weeds and keeps in moisture.

One major problem with mowing is that, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, lawn mowers are big polluters. The average gas-powered lawn mower produces as much pollution per hour as 11 automobiles. You can reduce the pollution factor by changing mower types. Options include propane, solar and electric lawn mowers and, the old standby, manual reel mowers.

If you grew up pushing a reel mower around, don't automatically dismiss this option. Today's reel mowers are lighter and have more cutting power than the ones from your childhood, plus they are almost maintenance free so there is little additional cost once they are purchased (they normally cost \$80 to \$150). What's more, you can use lawn mowing as a fitness program. However, even modern-day reel mowers are difficult to push on steep or bumpy yards, and they may require more physical strength or energy than you possess.


Electric mowers are also low-maintenance and emission-free alternatives to gas-powered mowers. The drawback to these is that they can be expensive (often costing between \$200 and \$500),

and their usefulness is limited by the length of their cord (cords should be as much as 100 yards in length). A rechargeable cordless model can remedy that problem, though the battery life of a cordless model tends to be about 90 minutes.

Solar-powered mowers sound absolutely ideal, and do possess many fine qualities, but they are rather pricey. Some cost more than \$700.

Once you have figured out how you're going to cut your grass, keep in mind the importance of cutting height. Turf-grasses each have ideal cutting heights that are individual to their variety, recommendations for which are available from turf producers and your local Extension office or other landscape professional. Find out the proper height for your type of grass and stick to that height each time you mow. Try to mow often enough so that you are never removing more than one-third of the turf-grass height at any one time. This will keep the lawn healthy and also reduce the volume of grass clippings on your lawn.

Proper fertilization is yet another component of sustainable lawn care. Test your soil to see what nutrients it needs before you apply any fertilizer, use only the amount of fertilizer called for—too much costs you money and may damage the environment; too little will not optimize your lawn's potential. Slow-release fertilizers also tend to be less harmful to the environment, and will not send your grass into a growth surge.

Finally, think about the type of grass you have in your lawn and if it is really well suited for your environment and management situation. New turf-grass varieties and cultivars are constantly being released that may prove to be better options than what is in your yard now. Also, think about something besides traditional turf-grass for at least part of your lawn area. Other options include ornamental grasses, clovers, wildflowers and mosses and other groundcovers. 

Katie Lamar Jackson is a writer, editor and photographer for the Alabama Agricultural Experimental State and Auburn University school of agriculture.



Electric lawn mowers don't give off air pollutants like gasoline-powered ones, but they typically cost a little more to buy new.

Prune Properly

By Katie Lamar Jackson

Pruning plants can be an exercise in self doubt. Will I cut too much or too little? Will I snip the right limbs at the right locations? Will I get so clip-happy that my shrubs are bald?

Relax. Pruning doesn't have to be an onerous task.

The first rule of prudent pruning is to have a plan and a goal before you make the first cut. Decide in advance if you are pruning to reshape a plant, remove dead or diseased limbs, rejuvenate a neglected plant or induce more blooms or fruit.

The second rule is to remember that pruning is good for most woody plants. It stimulates growth, removes dead or dying limbs and allows for better air movement and light penetration into a plant's interior.

The third rule is to remember that more is less, and less is more. Frequent, light pruning is usually more effective for trees, plants and shrubs (and even some annual flowers that benefit from deadheading or pinching back to promote better growth and blooming) than occasional extreme pruning.

There are two basic types of pruning procedures—thinning and heading. Thinning allows you to remove select limbs and shoots from inside and outside the plant canopy so that plants look more kempt, but still retain their natural form. You take out entire limbs and stems, cutting them right where they join other limbs or the trunk, but doing so selectively so the general shape of the plant is not altered.

Heading, on the other hand, usually involves cutting the tops (and sometimes sides) off of plants to greatly reduce their size and volume. This promotes more vigorous regrowth than

thinning, but also causes the plant to form a dense, compact growth habit that changes its natural shape. Heading is often the best way to rejuvenate plants that have gotten too big and gangly or simply need a fresh start. It is also the basic premise used to hedge shrubs along walkways and in formal garden settings.

Regardless of whether you thin or head your plants, follow the "rule of thirds"—reduce the size of the plant or the number of stems on a plant by no more than one-third each time you prune.

The next big issue is the timing of your pruning activity. You can prune dead or diseased limbs at any time during the year, but more extensive pruning should be done at fairly specific times of year depending on the plant. Timing varies depending on local climates, so it's always safer to check with local plant experts for a local

timetable. Generally, though, flowering or fruiting shrubs can be pruned after they finish blooming or fruiting, while many fruit trees are best pruned when they are dormant.

Finally, always use sharp pruning tools so the cut will be clean and try to cut into live wood or stem but avoid injuring the bark around the remaining branches. And do not use pruning paints or dressings. Research has shown these do not promote healing and may even trap bugs or diseases in the stem.

Once you get the hang of it, pruning can be an almost artistic exercise. Who knows, you may be the next Edward Scissorhands. 🪄

Katie Lamar Jackson is a writer, editor and photographer for the Alabama Agricultural Experimental State and Auburn University school of agriculture.



It's important to use sharp tools when pruning to get a clean cut and avoid damaging the plant tissue.

Seeds of the Future

By Katie Lamar Jackson

For 10,000 years or more—ever since humans first began cultivating crops, in fact—people have ensured their gardening future by saving seed from one year's planting to use the following year.

Today, many people rely on seed companies for their annual seed stock so seed saving has become something of a lost art. However, more and more farmers and gardeners interested in preserving heirloom varieties and in protecting the genetic diversity of food and fiber crops are saving and sharing seeds.

Seed savers are people who save seeds or tubers for vegetables, grains, herbs, flowers, nuts and fruits.

Commercial seed companies have done a remarkable job of providing high quality seeds and plant material that produce consistent crops each year. Unfortunately, many of these hybridized seeds do not produce a second generation of seeds that are true to form. The result is that thousands of varieties of vegetables and flowers are being lost from our seed reserves, which in turn depletes the botanical gene pool.

In an effort to preserve this genetic diversity and also hang on to heirloom varieties of plants, seed-saving organizations have sprung up across the world.

Among these is Seed Savers Exchange, a nonprofit organization that has for many years been helping gardeners and farmers save and share heirloom seeds and plants. The Seed Savers Network in Australia is another long-established and highly successful seed saving organization that focuses especially on nations in need of greater, more secure food resources and botanical diversity.




But you don't have to be a professional botanist or an activist to save seeds and, thus, botanical history. It's something you can do in your own backyard by following a few simple steps.

Save only seeds from your best specimen—the ones that produced the tastiest fruit, the hardiest plants or the most handsome flowers.

Harvest the seed with care (small-seeded crops, such as lettuces, can be shaken into a paper bag for collection), clean off any pulp from the seed and arrange them in a single layer in a glass pan. Place the dish in a sunny and well-ventilated spot for a week or so until the seeds are fully dry. Put the dried seeds in an envelope labeled with the name of the plant and the date of seed harvest, then store these in a cool, dry location.

To find out more about seed saving and exchange groups, visit Seedsaving



and Seedsavers' Resources at <http://homepage.eircom.net/~merlyn/seedsaving.html>. Learn more about Seed Savers Exchange at www.seedsavers.org or Seed Savers Network at www.seedsavers.net. 

Katie Lamar Jackson is a writer, editor and photographer for the Alabama Agricultural Experimental State and Auburn University school of agriculture.

Straw Bale Gardening

By Kent Rogers

Kent Rogers of Wake Forest has successfully cultivated a vegetable garden in bales of straw. Kent points out that the method produces good-looking, healthy plants without weeds, and is especially convenient for people who don't have a large plot of ground to till, or who are physically unable to do a lot of kneeling, bending, raking and hoeing.

Here is some of his advice for people interested in straw bale gardening. Kent is a member of Wake Electric, a Touchstone Energy cooperative. You can contact him by mail at 13028 Powell Rd, Wake Forest, NC 27587, and by e-mail at kent.rogers@earthlink.net.

Getting started

I have learned that any type of straw or hay bale will work. Pine straw will not work. Bales that are tightly packed work best.

Use bales with regular twine if you can, because the twine will rot along with the bale. Synthetic twine does not rot but will be OK. Shop around for bale prices.

Arrange your bales in rows so they can help hold each other together. Orienting the bales with strings on the ground works best.

If you make more than one row of bales, put them wide enough apart so your lawnmower can get between them. And because you'll be watering them, place bales where the water will drain away.

You can use seeds if you add some potting mix on top of the bales for germination. I transplant my vegetables directly into the bales.

It takes 10 days to prepare your bales.

Days 1-3: Water the bales thoroughly each day.

Days 4-6: Sprinkle the bales with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of ammonium nitrate or sulphate (34-0-0) per bale per day and water it in.

Days 7-9: Cut back to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the nitrate/sulphate per bale per day and continue to water it in.

Day 10: No more nitrate/sulphate, but continue to keep the bales damp.

Day 11: Transplant your veggies into the bales. Use a trowel to help make a crack in the bale for each plant. Place the plant down to its first leaf. I like adding some potting mix to chink the crack around the plant. Close the crack back together.

How many plants per bale?

Try 2 or 3 tomato plants, 3 peppers, 2 sets of squash, up to 4 cucumber sets, and 3 or 4 okra plants per bale.

Be prepared to stake or trellis any plant with a stalk. I recommend using a tall trellis for tomatoes. Tomatoes can easily get 8 feet tall.

I don't recommend corn with this method. They will get too top heavy.

Water the bales as needed but at least once a day in the beginning. Just don't let the bales get dried out.

I recommend some sort of liquid fertilizer. I use liquid Miracle Gro as needed.

The bales may start to sprout, but that is no problem. I give my bales a "haircut" every so often with a knife.

I don't have nearly the worms, bugs, or other pests as a traditional garden, but use pesticides or fungicides as needed.

At season's end you can use the bales for mulch, or bust them up and set new bales on them next year.

For additional info and a lot more photos, please visit my online bale gardening thread at: www.4042.com/4042forums/showthread.php?t=12405



Plan on using a trellis of some kind for tall stalks like this okra.

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☐

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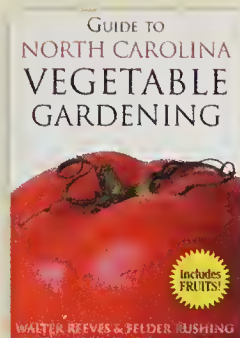
Blue Ridge EMC members Cindy and Jim Rice of Boone make and sell a wide selection of unique, handcrafted sterling and silver jewelry using both traditional pieces and unusual gemstones from around the world. Their booth at outdoor craft shows displays more than 800 pieces and you can also see their one-of-kind pendants online, as well as at Main Street Fine Crafts Gallery & Co-op in Blowing Rock and The Shoppes at Farmers Hardware in Boone. If you don't see what you want among their inventory picture stones, fossil ammonites, meteorites and more, let them know your fancy and they will custom-mount your choice in a silver setting. Custom jewelry prices range from \$95 to \$225, depending on the stone. Pendants in stock start around \$24.

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on the bookshelf

North Carolina Vegetable Gardening

This new guide looks at vegetable gardening in North Carolina, and includes advice on how to select, plant and grow the state's top edible plants. The guide tells gardeners when and where to plant, as well as providing recommendations on the best vegetables and herbs for a North Carolina garden. Its frost table for spring and fall gives 50 percent probabilities and dates for 12 towns and cities. "Guide to North Carolina Vegetable Gardening" is written by Walter Reeves and Felder Rushing. Published by Cool Springs Press in Franklin, Tenn. Softcover, 288 pages, \$12.95.



(800) 509-4787
www.coolspringspress.net

Best Garden Plants for North Carolina

This book is especially helpful for new gardeners or gardeners new to North Carolina. It features more than 300 varieties of plants best suited to North Carolina growing conditions, including annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs, vines, climbers, roses, bulbs and herbs. The book includes information on each plant's special features, its habitat, height and spread, best soil, light and water conditions, along with tips about the best use of the plant in a garden and more than 300 full-color photographs. Pam Beck and Laura Peters co-authored "Best Garden Plants for North Carolina." Softcover, 176 pages, \$16.95. Published by Lone Pine Publishing in Auburn, Wash.



(800) 518-3541
www.lonepinepublishing.com

"A Chosen Few"

In her latest book, Carolyn Booth continues her saga of the Ryan and McBryde families between the rivers in eastern North Carolina. The tale explains that when Franklin Roosevelt is elected in 1932, his New Deal programs hold great promise for young farmers like Len Ryan. Ryan has married Millie McBryde and hopes to qualify for Penderlea Homesteads, a utopian subsistence community that includes a picture-perfect cottage, out-buildings and livestock for only \$60 a year. Emily McAllister from Onslow County, a character from Booth's earlier books, emerges as chairwoman of the Penderlea Homesteads Applications Committee. New in this book is a genealogy chart to aid in identifying characters in all three books in the series: "Between the Rivers," "Bandeaux Creek," and "A Chosen Few." Published by Chapel Hill Press. Softcover, 405 pages, \$18.95.



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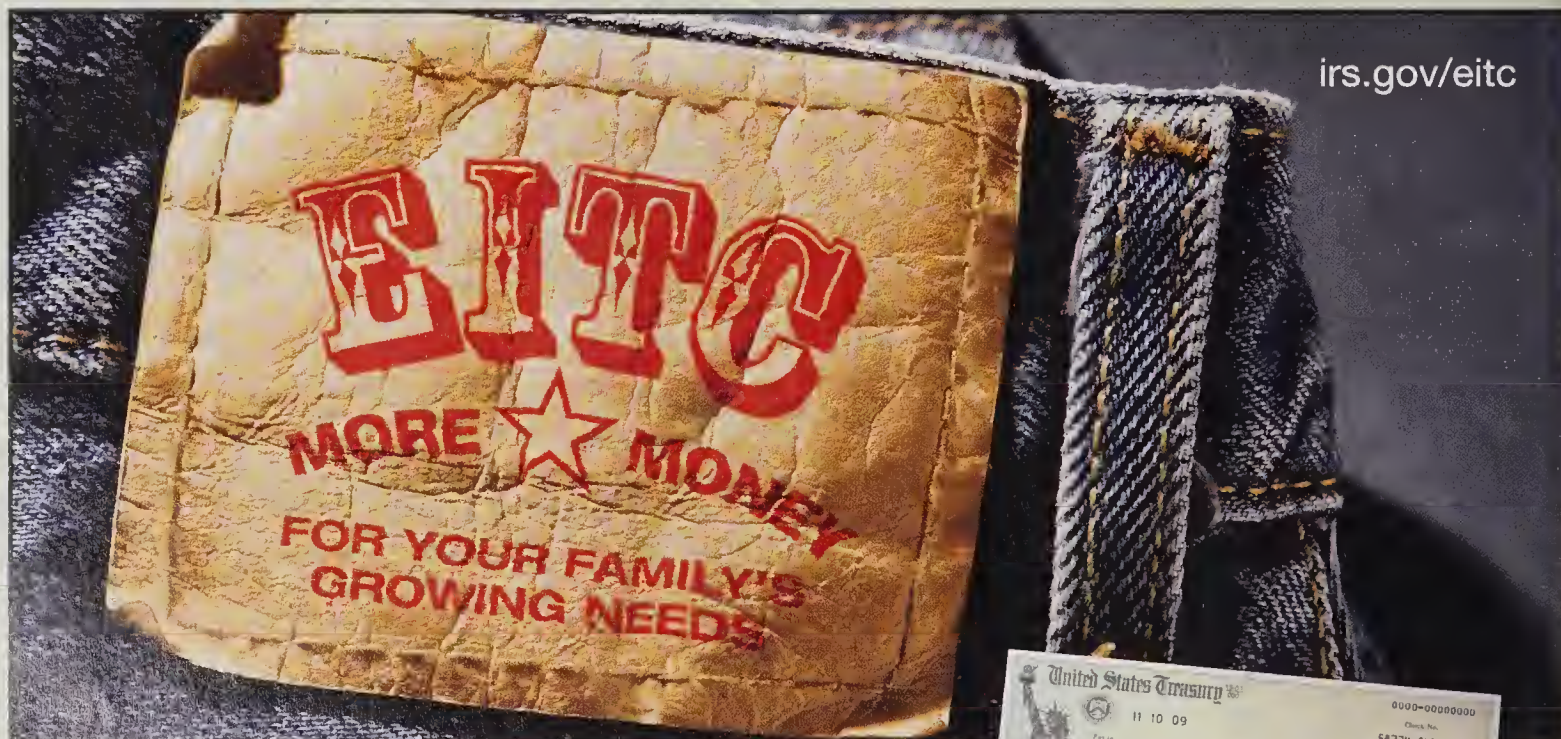
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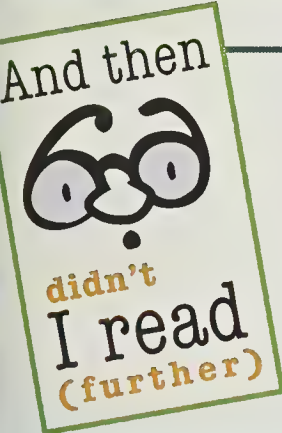
Phone*etics

1	ABC 2	DEF 3
GHI 4	JKL 5	MNO 6
PQRS 7	TUV 8	WXYZ 9
*	0	#

"I never think about the future—it...

2 6 6 3 7 - 7 6 6 6 - 3 6 6 8 4 4
A M M D P - P M M M - D M M T G G
B N N E R - R N N N - E N N U H H
C O O F S - S O O O - F O O V I I

If you were to punch in the number above on your telephone keypad you would spell out the three missing words of this quotation from Albert Einstein.



Recent headlines

Case of West Virginia man
passing gas dropped
Group asks Ben & Jerry's
to switch to breast milk

-all the news that fits, they print

MATCH BOXES

4	9	3	0	6

This time they do!
Solve this multiplication problem and write your answer in the box tops. Then match the boxes in the problem with the boxes in the code key below to find two hidden words.

0	1	2	3	4	6	8	9
N	H	T	O	W	G	I	R

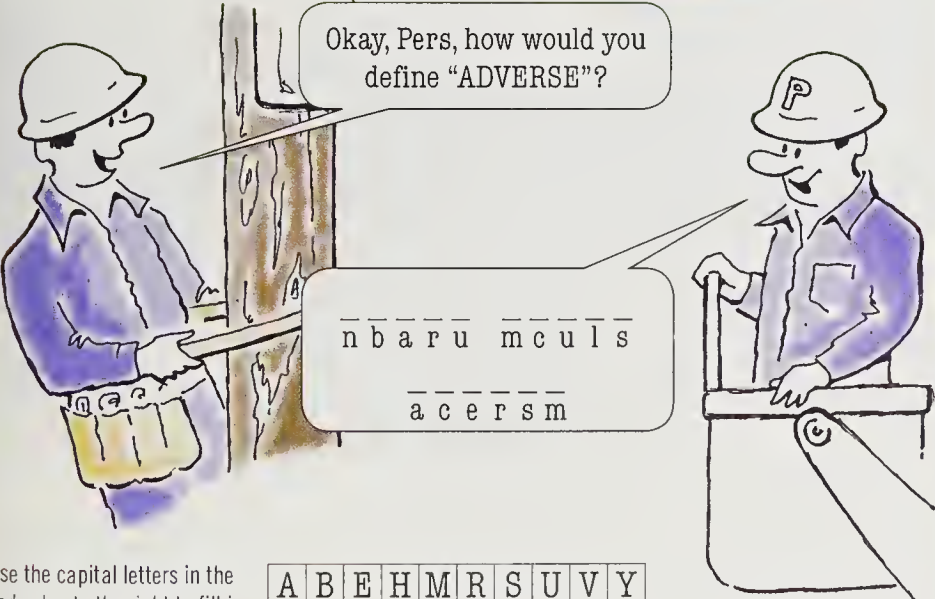
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I thought that I would never see some crackers get the best of me, but now I have, and it's a pain—I'm bested by some cellophane.
I find it more than just frustrating—it is downright humiliating to order a salad and soup du jour and be served crackers without a skewer, or scissors or something to puncture the wrapper without seeking help from some snippersnapper.
If I were a crackerbusiness backer, I'd urge them to sack their cracker packer, and hire an average C.O.E.* who is no stronger than you or me.

—cgj

*Cracker Opening Expert

PERCY P. CASSIDY POLES APART



Use the capital letters in the code clue to the right to fill in the blanks above.

A	B	E	H	M	R	S	U	V	Y
u	n	s	c	r	a	m	b	l	e

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40 X 80.....	CALL

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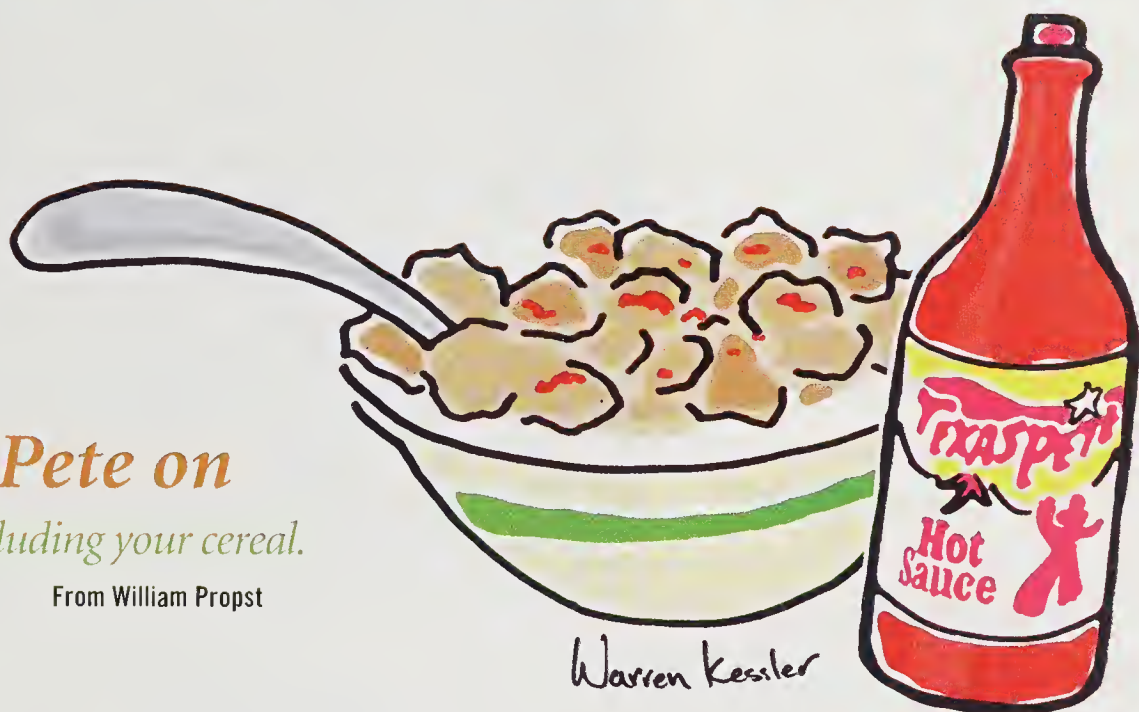
W R O N G x T L = R I G H T

YOU KNOW YOU'RE FROM

Carolina country if...

...you eat **Texas Pete on everything**, including your cereal.

From William Propst



Warren Kessler

From Tom Reeve, formerly of Sparta

- ... At age 12, you went into Farmers Hardware for an item called a "flass water," and realized some time later that it's actually spelled and pronounced "fly swatter."
- ... Hiking down to Highway 21 you played "Guess the Car," and your choices were Chevy, Ford and Plymouth.
- ... At hog butchering time, you'd take the liver from one hog and have fresh fried liver and gravy that afternoon.
- ... Two weeks prior to Easter you started robbing a few eggs from the hen house and hiding them in the barn so there would be some unmarketable eggs to decorate and hide on Easter Sunday.
- ... In winter the snow blew so hard through the leaky windows and walls that there would be snow on your bed when you woke up.

From Martha Lemly Williamson, Randleman

- ... Your grandmother gave you money tied in a corner of a hanky.
- ... Bottle caps got you into the movies.
- ... Special "sammys" included mayo and cucumbers.
- ... You carried a collapsible cup in your purse.
- ... You saved Mrs. Filbert's box tops, Octagon soap coupons and snuff coupons.

From Sylvia Beech, Moravian Falls

- ... The whole community grieved when heavy flooding cancelled the Shuffletown Drag Strip races on Sunday afternoon.
- ... You walked alone in the dark to the bus stop and waited in a rusty metal shed while sitting on wooden wire spools.
- ... Your best friend rode with you on the bicycle trail through the woods to the boat landing store to buy a grape soda and Zota candy that you bought with saved-up empty glass bottles.
- ... For months, your brothers collected plastic gallon jugs and wired them together to make a canoe.

From Terry Jones, Cornelius

- ... You spread straw under the persimmon tree in late October to keep the persimmons from smashing and make them easy to find.
- ... You waited in the tractor shed before dawn with a 12-gauge to catch crows landing in the cornfield.
- ... You picked up and cared for the baby rabbits you almost mowed over while cutting hay.
- ... You chased after the tractor furrow to pull out some big ol' fish-ing worms.
- ... You picked turnip and mustard greens for some pot likker.
- ... You listened in on the party line to hear the latest gossip.

From Bud Hargrave, Lexington

- ... You install security alarms on your house and garage, but leave both unlocked.
- ... You think that the tobacco barn out back is part of your home.
- ... You can name two hurricanes that blew away your neighbors' trailers.
- ... You find 60 degrees a little chilly.
- ... You know several people who have hit a deer more than once.
- ... You know for certain that Charlotte is not really the state capital.
- ... You end up having a long phone conversation with someone who dialed a wrong number.
- ... You know three different recipes for baked beans and which one you can eat before going to a funeral.

From William Propst

- ... You live in Cat Square and the surrounding towns are Henry, Plateau, Pumpkin Patch and Hog Hill.
- ... Someone reminded you to pull up your pants and you snapped the other gallop on your overalls.
- ... You use words that a lot of other people can't understand, like "cheer" (chair), "far wood" (firewood), "flo" (floor), "boat" (bolt), "dim der ranches" (them there wrenches), and "shiken" (chicken).
- ... You go fishing with TNT.
- ... You go hunting and come back well rested.

From Catherine "Dee" Smith, Mebane

- ... You sold persimmons to a neighbor for 25 cents a quart.
- ... Before going on your Sunday night date, you had to carry water by the bucket from the spring to fill up the washing machine.
- ... You skipped school with a bunch of girls, but all you did was smoke cigarettes.
- ... You pulled the choke out on that '47 Plymouth and flooded it out in the middle of the Hwy. 54 intersection.
- ... Lying in bed at night you looked at the moon shining on your face wishing it would make your freckles go away.
- ... After you had a baby, you stayed in the hospital for a week and would be fed and bathed between seeing them bring in your newborn. 🍌

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March Events



For the 17th year, historic Poplar Grove Plantation will mark the start of spring with its perennially popular Herb & Garden Fair, March 28–29. To learn more, visit www.poplargrove.com.

ONGOING

“Cleveland County’s History”
Kings Mountain Historical Museum
Through April 25, Kings Mountain
(704) 739-1019
www.kingsmountainmuseum.org

“A View from Space”
Granville Museum
Through May 2, Oxford
(919) 693-9706
www.granvillemuseumnc.org

“Masters of the Night”
NC Arboretum
Traveling exhibit about bats
Through May 10, Asheville
(828) 665-2492

“Escultura Social”
Nasher Museum of Art
Art from Mexico City
Through June 7, Durham
(919) 684-5135
www.nasher.duke.edu

“Inside Africa”
Through Dec. 2009, Rocky Mount
(252) 972-1167
www.rockymountnc.gov/museum

“Stars of the Pharaohs”
Through Dec. 2009, Rocky Mount
(252) 972-1167
www.rockymountnc.gov/museum

**Perquimans Arts League
Members Show**
March 6–28, Hertford
(252) 426-1432
www.perquimansarts.org

1

Priceless Pieces Quilt Show
March 1–25, Roanoke Island
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

6

Claudia Russell
Folk Concert
New Bern
(252) 633-6444
www.downeastfolkarts.org

East Coast World Finals Rodeo
March 6–8, Charlotte
(704) 882-6994

7

A Night to Remember
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with Johnny Dollar Band
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www.coastalwomensshelter.org

Train Show
March 7–8, New Bern
(252) 638-8872

EHA Indoor Hunter Horse Show
March 7–8, Williamston
(252) 527-3887
www.nceha.com

8

Vega String Quartet
John C. Campbell Folk School
Murphy
(828) 389-2595

Duck Hunting Lecture

Speaker Travis Morris
Elizabeth City
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www.museumofthealbemarle.com

10

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New Bern
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www.carteretliteracy.org

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www.odaha.org

“Narnia”
StageHANDS production
March 13–15, 20–22, 27–28,
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www.newberncivictheatre.org

14

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www.johnstoncountync.org

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Robbins
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Gun & Knife Show
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16

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19

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on statesmen, currency
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20

Barrel Bonanza Show
Horse Show
March 20–21, Williamston
(252) 442-8122
www.showwithus.com

21

Horse Show
Smithfield
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www.newbernfarmersmarket.com

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28

Wine Festival

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www.newbernwinefestival.com

ASA Weekly Racing

Stock car racing
Kenly
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Blowing Rock
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www.blowingrock.com

Spring Fling

Apex
(919) 303-4673
www.hopencc.org

Herb & Garden Fair

March 28-29, Wilmington
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www.poplargo.com

31

Southern Gardens

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For June: April 24

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Rich in community spirit, this northern Piedmont county is dotted with small farms, rolling hills and sweet valleys. The county is home to Lake Hyco and Mayo Lake, and two small mountains, Mt. Tirzah and Hagars Mountain. The headwaters of three river basins, Neuse, the Roanoke and the Tar, provide clean drinking water to southern and eastern North Carolina. Although there are nine townships districts, Roxboro is the only incorporated municipality. Unincorporated communities include Timberlake, Rougemont and Hurdle Mills. Folks enjoy the Homestead Steak House and Restaurant in Timberlake, just south of Roxboro. A dining destination since the 1980s, its menu includes baked sweet potatoes and fried banana peppers, and you can browse its country store. The family-owned Tree Frog Nursery in Rougemont is a delightful stop for ornamental grasses, trees and shrubs, as well as free-range eggs, homemade jams and frog-themed gifts. Treats in Roxboro include a colorful mural on Main Street depicting historic downtown, several specialty shops and Coleman's Pharmacy, an authentic drugstore that ladles out ice cream floats. An interesting historic tour covers Roxboro's commercial district as well as a museum and homes sporting many architectural styles. To get a tour brochure, call (336) 598-0918 or e-mail RUDC@esinc.net. For polished entertainment, check out The Kirby, a splendidly restored movie house on Main Street that offers live theatre, dance and concerts.

Three top spots:

Palace Pointe: This modern complex south of Roxboro offers a slew of family activities in one place, including bowling lanes, roller skating rink, video gameroom, billiards, eight movie screens and a diner. (336) 598-5050 or www.palacepointe.com.

Roxboro Motorsports Dragway: A few years back, owners Henry and Jerry Martin expanded the pit area at this strip on Thomas Store Rd. Events include test-n-tune and fun-n-grudge events, along with April's annual Easter bash. (336) 364-3724 (DRAG) or www.roxboromotorsports.com.

Two fun lakes: Mayo Lake is a 2,800-acre lake with a 120-acre park. Located off Hwy. 49, northeast of Roxboro on Neal's Store Rd. (SR 1515), attractions include rental cabins and trails with plant identification plaques. (336) 597-1755 or <http://recreation.personcounty.net>. Hyco Lake is a 3,750-acre lake northwest of Roxboro off Hwy. 57. Its 65-acre park has facilities for tennis, camping, boating, fishing, swimming and water skiing. (336) 599-4343 or www.hicolake.com.

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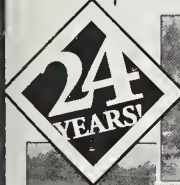
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Options among today's water-saving toilets

Flushing toilets is one of the major water-consuming activities in the homes of most families. Most older toilets use 3.5 to 5 gpf (gallons per flush) of water. Some very old ones, many of which are still in use, consume as much as 7 gpf. You can identify these by a large, tall toilet tank.

New toilets, by law, cannot use more than 1.6 gpf. With a modern bowl and internal plumbing designs, these new water-saving toilets flush effectively. Only occasionally will you need to double flush. Some FloWise models by American Standard use as little as 1.28 gpf with standard gravity flush technology.

People know that old water-guzzling toilets can increase their water bills, but they often don't realize these toilets may also increase their heating bills during winter. Each time you flush an old toilet, the tank is refilled with about five gallons of cold water from your water supply. During the summer, the cold water actually makes the toilet tank sweat.

As cold water rests in the toilet tank, it draws heat from the bathroom as the water warms to room temperature. Water has a high heat content and absorbs a lot of room heat. This is why water is often used as an effective heat storage medium for solar systems. Your furnace or heat pump has to run longer to replenish the heat the toilet tank water absorbs.

You have many toilet options, ranging from relatively standard 1.6 gpf gravity models to no water at all. "Gravity" is the pressure of the weight of water during the flushing action. When a gravity model is flushed, water going into the bowl is used to clean the sides of the bowl. Most of the water drains down inside the back of the toilet. This creates negative pressure to literally suck the water and waste out of the toilet bowl.

Most low-cost toilets at retail stores are 1.6 gpf gravity designs. These are typically two-piece toilets with a separate

tank that bolts to the bowl, and they are more common and less expensive than the designer one-piece toilets. Being in two pieces, they are easier to carry and install. The water usage for one- and two-piece models is the same.

If you have several men in your family, consider installing a urinal. They use less than half as much water as a standard toilet and are not difficult to install. Most of the major bathroom fixture manufacturers offer urinals so you should not have trouble finding them.



This shows the water flow in an American Standard FloWise™ 1.28 gpf elongated toilet. The water both rinses the bowl and flows underneath it to create the flushing suction.



This is a standard two-piece toilet which uses the FloWise™ 1.28 gpf flushing design. Its design simplifies the assembling of the tank to the bowl section

Some models have a cover and are small, unlike urinals in public bathrooms.

Unless you have small children who might get confused, consider installing a dual-flush toilet. Several plumbing fixture manufacturers offer them. You select a standard flush of 1.6 gallons for solid wastes or a water-saving flush of 1.1 gallons for liquid wastes. They look identical to standard toilets, except for the dual-option flush handle.

Another design uses pressure-assist for a flush with low water usage. The water pressure compresses air trapped in a vessel inside the tank. When you flush the toilet, this pressure assists gravity to create an effective flushing action inside the back of the toilet. The flush is rapid, but it is louder than a standard toilet so you may not want to install this option by a bedroom. 

The following companies offer water-saving toilets:

American Standard (800) 442-1902
www.americanstandard-us.com

Biolet (800) 524-6538
www.biolet.com

Briggs Plumbing (800) 627-4443
www.briggsplumbing.com

Microphor (800) 358-8280
www.microphor.com

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www.saniflo.com

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James Dulley is an engineer and syndicated columnist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

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Lazy Man's Ribs

- 2½ pounds pork baby back ribs, cut into eight pieces
- 2 teaspoons Cajun seasoning
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 1 cup ketchup
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ⅓ cup orange juice
- ⅓ cup cider vinegar
- ¼ cup molasses
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon barbecue sauce
- 1 teaspoon stone-ground mustard
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon Liquid Smoke, optional
- Dash salt
- 5 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1 tablespoon cold water

Rub ribs with Cajun seasoning. Layer ribs and onion in a 5-quart slow cooker. In a bowl, combine the next 12 ingredients. Pour over ribs. Cover and cook on low for 6 hours or until meat is tender.

Remove ribs and keep warm. Strain cooking juices and skim fat; transfer to a saucepan. Combine cornstarch and water until smooth; stir into juices. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Serve with ribs.

Yield: 4 servings

Blueberry Crumble

- 3 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- ⅓ cup old-fashioned oats
- ⅓ cup packed brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons chopped almonds
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3 tablespoons cold butter
- Vanilla ice cream



In a greased 9-inch microwave-safe pie plate, combine the blueberries, sugar and cornstarch. Cover and microwave on high for 7–8 minutes or until thickened, stirring twice.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine the oats, brown sugar, flour, almonds and cinnamon. Cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Sprinkle over blueberry mixture. Microwave, uncovered, on high for 2–3 minutes or until butter is melted. Serve with ice cream.

Yield: 4 servings

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Recipes are by Taste of Home magazine, unless otherwise indicated. For a sample copy, send \$2 to Taste of Home, Suite 4321, PO Box 990, Greendale WI 53129-0990. Visit the Web page at www.tasteofhome.com.



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Pretzel Crusted Chicken

- 4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves (6 ounces each)
- ¼ cup honey mustard
- 8 thin slices deli ham
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted
- ½ cup crushed pretzels

Cut a horizontal slit in one side of each chicken breast half to within ½-inch of the opposite side. Spread honey mustard inside each pocket; stuff with two ham slices.

Place in a greased 13-by-9-by-2-inch baking dish. Brush with butter; sprinkle with pretzels. Bake, uncovered at 350 degrees for 40–45 minutes or until chicken juices run clear.

Yield: 4 servings

Winning reader recipe

Five Star Coconut Cake

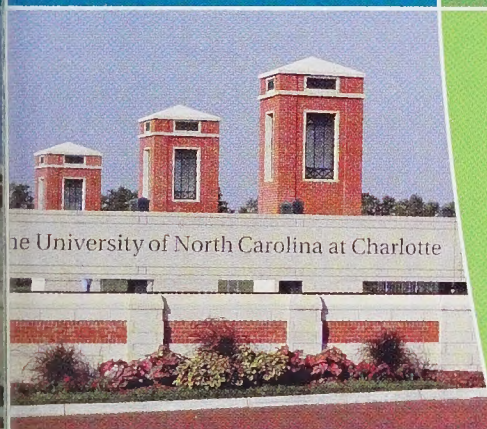
- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1 can (small) mandarin oranges
- 1 can (15-ounce) unsweetened pineapple chunks (drain and reserve juice), chop pineapple fine
- 1 can cream of coconut (found in mixed drink section of grocery store)
- 1 box (small) instant vanilla pudding mix
- 1 package (small) frozen fresh coconut and add to this ½ can flake coconut
- 1 small (12-ounce) tub of Cool Whip

Mix cake mix according to package directions and add mandarin oranges. Bake at 350 degrees for 30–35 minutes. Remove from oven and punch holes in cake with a fork. Mix juice of pineapple with cream of coconut and pour over cake. Cool completely. Mix pudding according to package directions and add pineapple. Spread over cake. Spread Cool Whip over pudding. Sprinkle with coconut. Refrigerate overnight.

Carol Gregory of Ronda, a member of EnergyUnited, will receive \$25 for submitting this recipe.



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85	\$ 26.26	\$ 17.67

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